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PORT ST LUCIE POLICE DEPARTMENT
WARRANT APPLICATION

Agency Case # 310013588

Officer: Det. Stuart Klearman

Victim:



2010 JUN 29 PM 12:49
ST. LUCIE COUNTY
CLERK OF CIRCUIT COURT

Suspect:

Walter Watts

b/m/dob: 12-27-1961

FL DL: W320-900-61-467-0

SSN: [REDACTED]

1131 SW Estaugh Ave

Port St Lucie, FL 34953

HP: 772-204-2408

Suspect:

Beverly Jean Hutchings-Watts

b/f/dob: 07-31-1957

FL DL: H325-070-57-771-0

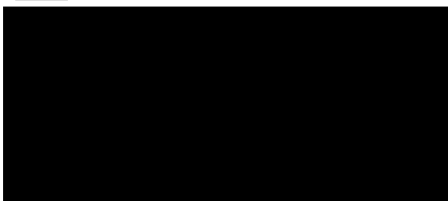
SSN: [REDACTED]

1131 SW Estaugh Ave

Port St Lucie, FL 34953

HP: 772-204-2408

Witness:



2550 SW Fairgreen Rd
Port St Lucie, FL 34987
HP: 772-408-0270

Offenses:

Aggravated Child Abuse F.S. 827.03(2)(b)

Date/Time of Occurrence: On or about 06-19-2010

Place of Occurrence: [REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

DETAILED NARRATIVE

On 06-28-2010, I was the on-call Detective for Crimes Against Persons and was called out at about 0230 hrs, that date, to investigate a child abuse case. The victim, [REDACTED] year old [REDACTED], had run away from home shortly before midnight on 06-27-2010, and was located by patrol officers about 1.5 miles from his residence in his pajamas and bare feet. He had been heading to his "[REDACTED]" house located at [REDACTED]. Officers learned that he had run away from his residence out of fear of being punished for something he did, and it was discovered that [REDACTED] had many lineal bruises on his back, the back of his legs, and abdomen areas. He also had what appeared to be some sort of healing "pick marks" on his abdomen area. [REDACTED] said that he had been "whooped" by [REDACTED] (Walter Watts, who is his [REDACTED]) the Saturday before (referring to 06-19-2010 as investigation would reveal) and that he was frequently "whooped" and punished harshly by [REDACTED] (Beverly Hutchings-Watts is [REDACTED]). [REDACTED] said that he had been beaten with a brown "extension cord" which officers were unable to locate. He also claimed that [REDACTED] had placed a pair of socks over/in his mouth and used blue tape to hold it in place while he was disciplined. Officers looked for such tape to no avail.

I responded to the Western Regional Office at 2950 SW Rosser Blvd, where Ofc. Steinkraus, 310, was waiting with [REDACTED]. Ofc. Bell and Lawler remained at the residence to hold it secure and to ensure the safety of two younger children (ages [REDACTED] and nearly [REDACTED]), who were asleep in their beds. It was learned that the two younger children were in the process of being [REDACTED] by the Watts.

I requested an immediate notification to the Florida Dept. of Children and Families in order to bring them into the investigation and utilize their resources as well.

At the station, Ofc. Steinkraus allowed me to upload the photos he had taken with his UCI camera to my laptop and I was able to view and print them. I observed the "pick marks" on [REDACTED] abdomen, a very long lineal bruise consisting of two parallel lines about 1/8 inches apart, travelling from his right shoulder blade area down to the top of his right hip. I also observed many similar bruises on the backs of his legs, below his buttocks, of similar appearance except that those also had a looped appearance as if the extension cord, in those instances, was folded over its length to shorten it. All of the bruises appeared to be in a similar state of healing, with no swelling or yellow, green or bluish discoloration common to bruises.

An electrical cord was located at the station which had jacks on the ends to connect electronics. The main part of the cord consisted of two wrapped wires, with each wire then fused together along the length which is common among such items and smaller, household extension cords. I placed this cord flat along the length of the lineal bruise on [REDACTED] back and found it to be a perfect match. The "void" in between the two parallel lineal marks was consistent with the natural void present in the style of cord, where the two wires are fused together.

Background checks revealed no arrest history except for a 1981 arrest for a forged instrument that Beverly had on her record. PSLPD had no prior contacts with the family. They had moved to [REDACTED] from Broward Co in approximately October 2009.

DCF Child Protective Investigator Samella Smith arrived. I briefed her and we proceeded to interview [REDACTED] to gather basic facts. [REDACTED] was extremely tired, having been up all night, but was able to articulate before he fell asleep, that the "Saturday before" (clarified to mean not the Saturday just passed, but the one prior, which was 06-19-2010) they were at a "[REDACTED]" doctor by a [REDACTED] restaurant, and [REDACTED] thought he had poured water on one of the other [REDACTED] boys. That night, he was punished for having food/drink in his bedroom. [REDACTED] claimed that [REDACTED] beat him with the electrical cord while [REDACTED] stood by watching telling him it would "do him good." [REDACTED] again said [REDACTED] had used a sock and blue tape to cover his mouth so neighbors would not hear him scream although, as tired as he was, he could not articulate whether that was at the same time/incident. [REDACTED] claimed he was often made to sleep on the concrete floor in the garage (there was a futon mattress on a rug and a sofa in the garage), and was frequently "punched in the face" by [REDACTED] (no evidence of injury).

During the time I interviewed [REDACTED], I noted a tendency to exaggerate as if he was trying to make his story more believable. Later, CPT noted the same tendency.

[REDACTED] fell asleep, so we discontinued the interview and began making arrangement for a CPT medical exam and interview.

I spoke briefly to "[REDACTED]" by telephone during the course of the night. She was reluctant to get involved but did tell me that a couple of months ago, [REDACTED] made disclosures to her (would not clarify) and that she had talked to [REDACTED] about what [REDACTED] said. She told me that if [REDACTED] was making a disclosure, it was true.

CPI Smith and I responded to the Watts' residence while [REDACTED] slept to interview the parents. We spoke first with Beverly Watts. [REDACTED] had been [REDACTED] by her about three years prior, and he had a documented history from school and mental health professionals of [REDACTED] when he didn't get his way, and other behavioral problems. Beverly said, at [REDACTED] doctor's advice, she weaned him off his medications out of fear they would cause sterility. I noted references in the file to him taking [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] previously. Beverly admitted that she disciplines [REDACTED] with a belt, and showed me two she had used. One was a woven style leather belt, the other a flat, wide leather belt. Neither of these two belts would have left the marks I observed. Beverly would not admit that anyone used an extension cord on [REDACTED]. She did confirm that they were at the spine and joint clinic as [REDACTED] had stated, on 06-19-10. Beverly also showed me a letter from Children's Home Society indicating that she had reached out to them, as they were involved in the [REDACTED] of the other two boys, for help with [REDACTED].

We interviewed Walter Watts as well. He said [REDACTED] used to use a belt on his behind, and this was how he disciplined. Walter admitted that he disciplined [REDACTED] on 06-19-2010 using a belt. Even when I showed him that the marks could not be caused by the belt he described, he denied using an electrical cord. I asked Walter if he ever had any tape, and learned he had a small quantity of a blue painter's masking tape (which he claimed was used up and he no longer had). This admission corroborated, to some extent, [REDACTED] claim regarding the tape.

Both parents said that [REDACTED] was difficult to deal with and both admitted that spanking with a belt was a normal form of discipline for them. They both denied knowing how [REDACTED] got the marks on his body. Regarding the "pick marks" Walter claimed they might be from [REDACTED] falling while skating.

During the interviews, I learned that they were in the process of [REDACTED] the two younger boys, and had recently obtained a court order allowing full time residency with them until the [REDACTED] was finalized. CPI Smith and I observed both boys to

be clean, well dressed, free from any signs of injury, and seeming happy with the Watts. Of note, [REDACTED] had said he was treated differently than the other two.

After concluding our interviews, I responded to Child Protection Team in Stuart, FL to observe the follow up interview and review medical findings. [REDACTED] was transported by an authorized DCF transporter.

ARNP Beth Herold did the medical exam on [REDACTED], with positive findings for abuse. She took higher resolution photos in good lighting which, when printed, showed [REDACTED] injuries much better than what I observed earlier, even with the naked eye. Further, ARNP Herold was able to photograph additional injuries which were covered by [REDACTED] pants, on his hips and buttocks areas. These were in addition to what I saw at the station. ARNP Herold explained that the injuries were consistent with being struck with something which could have been an extension cord, had broken the skin at the tip of several "loops" and appeared to have been caused at the same time. Further, given the healing stage, she said that they could have been caused on 06-19-2010, which would be in the 7-10 day range. ARNP Herold could not say whether the marks would or would not eventually fade or how long that process might take.

Case Coordinator Britney Hinckley conducted an interview with [REDACTED]. He remained consistent with the description of the punishment he received on Saturday 06-19-2010 and the blue tape. Both found, as I did, that [REDACTED] tends to add to his stories to make them more believable. They felt he was truthful with the tape and electrical cord disclosures.

DCF staffed the situation, and I recommended sheltering [REDACTED] at least, if not the other two boys. I spoke to DCF CPS Renee Morgan by phone and learned that DCF was sheltering [REDACTED]. Further, there was a Dependency Case Manager (reference to the [REDACTED] of the other two boys) on the way to remove them from the Watts residence as they were still legally wards of the state.

Based upon the totality of the investigation, there is Probable Cause to believe that both Walter and Beverly Watts committed an act of Aggravated Child Abuse on or about 06-19-2010. Whether one, or both, struck [REDACTED] with the extension cord, would matter little as both acted in concert, knowing what punishment [REDACTED] was receiving. F.S. 827.03(2)(b) reads:

"2) "Aggravated child abuse" occurs when a person:

(b) Willfully tortures, maliciously punishes, or willfully and unlawfully cages a child; or"

In the instant case, the key words are "maliciously punishes" and the number of strikes used to punish [REDACTED] were clearly numerous and without justification. The punishment he received went beyond discipline and served no other purpose other than to inflict severe pain to [REDACTED]. [REDACTED] described that the welts were very swollen and painful after he was beaten with the extension cord.

Therefore, it is requested that warrants be issued for Walter Watts for the charge of Aggravated Child Abuse. (Warrant Application for Beverly Hutchings-Watts under separate cover)

I swear the above statement is
Correct and true to the best of
My knowledge.

Sworn before me the undersigned
this 29th Day of June 2010.

Det. M. 401

Stacey Floyd

